

West Lafayette Fire Department May 2011

New Firefighter Joe Heater was hired as a probationary firefighter effective on May 18th, filling a position that had been vacant. Firefighter Heater brings with him State of Indiana certifications as a Firefighter I/II and as an EMT, as well as other certifications and a degree from Vincennes University. He is a graduate of Rossville High School and has gained valuable experience as a member of the Rossville Volunteer Fire Department. He was sworn in by Mayor Dennis at a brief ceremony following a regularly scheduled Board of Public Works and Safety meeting. In attendance were his wife and their two young children along with other family members and friends.

NLE and District 4 Training Combined local, state, and national training was held at the Muscatatuck Urban Training Center in Butlerville, Indiana May 16-20. Throughout the week, communication and coordination ranged from Washington, DC to the local responders in Muscatatuck and other sites in between. The exercise was successful for all involved. For West Lafayette and the District 4 Task Force it was a first time experience and all reports are that it was certainly worthwhile. Evaluators from the State have already given feedback indicating that the mobilization and deployment, the firefighting, and the other response efforts of the District 4 Task Force were impressive. They have expressed their opinion that the developing D4 Task Force is now considered to be an operationally ready component of the Indiana Department of Homeland Security.

West Lafayette supplied two firefighters and our older reserve fire engine to the District 4 efforts in this NLE (National Level Exercise). Each day was full of activity with a 7:00 am to 7:00 pm twelve hour operational period followed by a twelve hour rest and rehab period before starting again the next day. All of the firefighting was done by District 4. There were other groups and Districts operating at the same time but their focus was on other elements such as urban search and rescue in collapsed buildings. The NLE was an earthquake based scenario along the New Madrid Seismic Zone requiring interaction not only among various Indiana districts but among bordering states as well. It was designed to test all aspects of a catastrophic event response and then to apply the lessons learned. Personnel from other local fire departments, emergency management (TEMA), ambulance crews (TEAS), and police departments also participated in the exercise.

ISO Rating A representative from ISO (Insurance Services Office) was in West Lafayette working with myself and several other people to update the City's fire protection rating. Early indications are that the rating has improved and one particularly strong point was our fire apparatus and the equipment that is carried on the fire trucks. Also grading well was the response coverage provided by our three stations and the available water flow capacity of the hydrants along with the rest of the water supply system. The updated report and the updated grading are expected to be completed later this year.

Chief Drew